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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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SUBJECT: NEW MEA COUNTERTERRORISM DIRECTOR SOUMEN BAGCHI
SETTLES IN; HOME MINISTER CHIDAMBARAM WOULD LIKE TO VISIT
BETWEEN SEPT. 8 AND 13

¶1. (SBU) Soumen Bagchi, the new director of counterterrorism (CT) at the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), expressed interest in expanding U.S. - India CT cooperation in an Aug. 3 courtesy call in New Delhi. S/CT and Poloff brought the new CT Director up to date on pending activities, including:

- the outcomes of the bilateral Counterterrorism Joint Working Group (CTJWG) held in June in Washington,
- the US-India Bilateral Countering Terrorist Financing conference to be held September 14-17 in Delhi,
- the regional Countering Violent Extremism conference to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 27-30, and
- the ongoing program of Anti Terrorism Assistance training.

¶2. (U) Repeating a question that has become a theme with our Indian government interlocutors Director Bagchi inquired about the difference between "counterterrorism" and "countering violent extremism" and explained that if they are basically the same, changing the name only introduced confusion.

¶3. (SBU) Emboffs also stressed U.S. interest in proceeding with discussions on the Secure Freight Initiative and the Megaports program, and suggested it would be good to make as much progress as possible in advance of Prime Minister Singh's visit to the U.S. in November.

¶4. (SBU) Regarding plans for Home Minister Chidambaram's upcoming visit to the United States, Director Bagchi suggested we continue to work with the MEA America's desk to get further information on a firm date and the desired program in the United States. In a subsequent meeting, Americas Joint Secretary Gaitri Kumar told DCM and PolMinCouns that Minister Chidambaram would like to settle on dates convenient to his U.S. hosts between September 8 and ¶13. His primary focus is on using technology to counter terrorism. He would like to visit NCTC, and meet with appropriate officials, including, if possible, NSA General Jones, DNI Blair, CIA Director Panetta, and FBI Director Mueller.

15. (SBU) Bio Info: Mr. Bagchi reports to Special Secretary Vivek Katju, without the usual bureaucratic framework of an Additional Secretary or Joint Secretary in between them. Mr. Bagchi has served in San Francisco, MEA,s office in Mumbai, and Bangladesh.
ROEMER